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The Reston Bible Church

by Imran Syed

The Reston Bible Church is a non-denominational house of worship, meaning that it accepts all sectors of Christianity that enter the establishment; this includes Catholics, Protestants, Methodists, Baptists, and Orthodox worshippers. It is located in 45650 Oakbrook Ct., Sterling, Virginia, which is a 5 minute drive from my house. I went to the church on September 27, and attended the 12:00 PM service. The service was led by Mike Minter, who was the Pastor of Teaching and founder of the Reston Bible Church.

When I pulled up onto the parking lot of the Reston Bible Church, I was at awe with the architecture. Typically, the churches in the area I live tend to have the same architectural shape: a square frame on the bottom and the top comes up to a point when the Cross tops it off. The Reston Bible Church building structure appears very modern compared to the typical church shape. It gave me the impression that the church was very liberal and modern, rather than conservative to past practices. One section was cubed-shaped but the second section had an angled roof and the Cross was standing very tall on the roof above the entrance. Inside the building had an auditorium-like atmosphere. There was a stage and microphone system for the pastor to give the service to accommodate the large audience.

When I walked inside the establishment, a very cheery woman approached me and asked for

my name. I told her it was Imran and it seemed to astonish her. She then asked where I was from and if I was a Christian. I told her that I am from Pakistan and no, I was observing for a college assignment. She became all excited and escorted me to a seat very close to the front and if I had any questions, I should consult with her. I was very surprised of the hospitality she provided. After giving me the seat, she went back to her family and sat with them. I realized she wasn't part of the church staff, so I assume the church has created a very welcoming atmosphere with its regulars to treat newcomers with respect. I admire that kind of atmosphere.

The people in the Reston Bible Church are very diverse, ranging from Caucasians, Latinos, Asian, Middle-Easterners, and African-Americans. It was very family orientated as well. I've seen husbands with the wives all while juggling their children to get to their seats. One thing that surprised me was the dress-code. I assumed, based off what I have seen in the past from my friends going to church, that the dress-code would be formal. The Reston Bible Church seemed to have a casual dress-code, as I've seen people with shorts and flip flops to full on suits. I was wearing jeans and a hoodie, and I felt very comfortable attending the service.

The service in the Reston Bible Church lasted about ninety minutes. The service began with presenting a brief video, approximately four

to five minutes long, showing events that the church were providing for the community. These events included a blood drive, a starting point orientation for those interested in converting to the faith, a Nicaragua bike project drop off charity, a class based on the art of marriage, and a men's summit. This shows that the church has interest in other projects apart from faith, but to help, consult, and improve the community it has built. Following the video was the service from Mike Minter. The sermon was about loving one another. He presented the sermon in a laid back fashion, but in a way that I felt intrigued and motivated to practice what he preached. The tone was very casual, not using too much "Bible language" or being too overly dramatic where I would lose interest of it all together. It's very hard for me to stay focused for long periods of time, but the language he uses in his sermon was very applicable and engaging with the listeners. Following the sermon was the musical worship, which was very new to me. I am a Muslim and have never experienced musical worship in a mosque, so this was a new experience. It didn't make me feel closer to God, but it seemed to lift the spirits of others who would sing along to the songs. The service concluded with a prayer, with everyone in the audience would hold hand while the Pastor would recite a prayer for everyone. In the end, the service was very spontaneous. The Reston Bible Church gave off a liberal atmosphere and I didn't observed any ritualistic tendencies apart from the prayer recitation at the end of the service.

welcoming fashion, which gave me piece of mind and comfort attending the service. •

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In the end, attending and observing the Reston Bible Church was a very enriching experience. It gave me a nice perspective of how a very liberal Christian church engages with its audience. Upon arriving, I was greeted in a very